

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00605 261406Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIE-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
SSO-00 INRE-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-01 AID-05
PC-01 NEAE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 /099 W
-----027551 261425Z /40

O 261320Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9706

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

CINCUSNAVEUR IMMEDIATE

COMSIXTHFLT IMMEDIATE

EUCOM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 0605

BRUSSELS AND PARIS FOR LABATT

CINCUSNAVEUR AND EUCOM ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB PGOV TS

SUBJ: GENERAL STRIKE IN TUNIS, SITREP TWO

REF: TUNIS 0601, 261320Z JAN 78

1. AT 1330 LOCAL 26 JANUARY, THREE HOURS SINCE LAST SITREP,
SECURITY SITUATION HAS WORSENERED. IT IS NO LONGER A QUESTION
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OF STRIKE BUT OF GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES VERSUS VIOLENT
DEMONSTRATIONS INVOLVING SOME WORKERS BUT ALSO MANY YOUTHS.
TUNISIAN ARMED YOUTHS ARE NOW OUT IN FORCE IN MANY LOCATIONS
SURROUNDING MEDINA.

2. WE HAVE FAIRLY GOOD IDEA OF SITUATION BY MONITORING
POLICE RADIO FREQUENCIES. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DEATHS

BUT SO FAR UNIT COMMANDERS ARE UNDER ORDERS TO FIRE OVER DEMONSTRATORS' HEADS. IN ADDITION TO CENTER OF TOWN THERE ARE OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS IN WORKING CLASS AREAS INCLUDING LARGE GATHERING ALONG ROAD TO SOUSSE AT EDGE OF TOWN. NFRVH TEAR GAS IS BEING USED INCLUDING DROPS FROM HELICOPTERS. BRITISH EMBASSY REPORTS AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE AROUND EDGE OF MEDINA, BUT SITUATION NOW BACK TO NORMAL AT PORT DE FRANCE.

3. OUTSIDE OF TUNIS SITUATION NOT SO BAD. APPARENTLY NO TROUBLE IN MONASTIR OR BIZERTE AND ARMY APPARENTLY HAS SOUSSE AND SFAX BUTTONEED DOWN TIGHT WITH NO ONE ALLOWED ON STREETS. TUNIS SUBURBS COMPLETELY QUIET AND TROUBLE SEEMS TO BE CONFINED TO CENTER OF TOWN AND WORKING CLASS AREAS TO SOUTH.

4. RESIDENTIAL AREA AROUND EMBASSY IS SO FAR EFFECTIVELY CORDONED OFF BY ARMY AND POLICE. WE HAVE TAKEN FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES: AMERICAN LIBRARY AND USIS OFFICES, AID, PEACE CORPS AND FSO HAVE SENT EMPLOYEES HOME AND LOCKED UP. WE HAVE ADVISED MOST EMBASSY LOCALS TO GO HOME AND HAVE DISPERSED MOST VEHICLES TO RELATIVELY SAFE LOCATIONS.

PRECAUTIONARY DEFENSIVE MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN AT CHANCERY. WE WILL REASSESS SITUATION IN COURSE OF AFTERNOON AND FURTHER SITREPS WILL FOLLOW AS JUSTIFIED.
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5. WE HAVE JUST LEARNED FROM CANADIAN DOCTOR THAT ABOUT 300 PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TREATED FOR GUNSHOT WOUNDS AT THE TWO HOSPITALS.
MULCAHY

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